



Memorandum

To: Pascal Rettig
Planning Board Chair
City of Amesbury
62 Friend Street
Amesbury, MA 02913

Date: February 11, 2026

Project #: 201612.000

From: Patrick Dunford, P.E.
Senior Project Manager

Re: Proposed Mixed-use Development
1-9 Oakland Street, Amesbury, Massachusetts
Transportation Engineering Peer Review

As requested by the City of Amesbury, VHB conducted an independent peer review of the transportation-related material submitted as part of the Site Plan Review application for 1-9 Oakland Street in Amesbury, Massachusetts (the "Site"). The Site is located within the Central Industrial (IC) and Lower Millyard Overlay District (LMOD). The proposed development will consist of the construction of approximately 124 residential units and 4,045 square feet (sf) of supporting commercial space (the "Project").

This review considers the material provided and how it complies with the requirements of Amesbury's Zoning Bylaws and industry standards for the preparation of transportation assessments.

Proposed Project

The Project involves the construction of approximately 124 multi-family residential units and 4,045 sf of supporting space to be located in multiple separate spaces within the existing building to be renovated. In addition to the building renovations, a new surface parking lot will be constructed along with various Site infrastructure improvements.

Vehicular access is proposed to be provided via a new clearly defined full access curb cut on Oakland Street leading to the proposed 23-space surface parking lot and two separate garage entrances. A new garage entrance and associated curb cut will also be constructed at the southwesterly side of the building on Chestnut Street.

The findings of our review are presented in the following sections.

Scope of Review

The focus of this peer review was on the following material which was provided to VHB for review by the Amesbury Planning Board:

- › "Mixed-Use Development, 1-9 Oakland Street – Amesbury, Massachusetts" prepared by Greenman-Pederson Inc. (GPI) dated September 5, 2025;
- › "Proposed Site Plan Plans – Carriage Hill Lofts at Oakland Street" prepared by Millennium Engineering, Inc. dated September 23, 2025;
- › "Carriage Hill Lofts – Renovation and Addition" prepared by SV Design LLC dated September 29, 2025; and
- › "Project Narrative – Carriage Hill Lofts" prepared by SV Design LLC dated September 29, 2025; and
- › "Carriage Hill Lofts – Planning Board Presentation" November 25, 2025.

These documents were reviewed for consistency and general compliance with the following:

- › Amesbury Zoning Ordinance and Map (adopted April 12, 1971 with revisions through April 30, 2025); and

› *Transportation Impact Assessment (TIA) Guidelines*, Massachusetts Department of Transportation, March 13, 2014.

GPI Transportation Letter Review

VHB has reviewed the September 8, 2025 letter prepared by GPI which provided a summary of existing conditions near the Site, crash research, a sight distance analysis, trip generation estimates, and the expected increases in traffic on nearby roadways. While not a standard TIA, this information provides an appropriate understanding of the transportation aspects of the Project.

The following comments and requests are being provided using the same general order and format of the letter provided. VHB may provide additional comments related to the site plan and/or TIA following the review of any additional material which may be provided in response to this letter, or other items discussed at subsequent Project meetings.

Existing Conditions

1. **Geometry** – The descriptions of Oakland Street and Chestnut Street near the Site are accurate. A description of the Chestnut Street/Oakland Street intersection is not provided. The Oakland Street approach to Chestnut Street currently functions under Stop sign control with a Stop line also provided on Oakland Street. However, the Stop sign is mounted on a utility pole on the west side of Chestnut Street. This sign should be removed and a new sign should be posted at the northeast corner of the intersection following standards outlined in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)¹.
2. **Collisions** – The low crash experience noted is consistent with the low-volume, low-speed nature of the surrounding roads. Due to there only being one single crash reported in the five years studied, it is not possible to identify any correctable crash trends.

Design Conditions

3. **Sight Distance** – The sight distance evaluation was conducted using speed measurements conducted by GPI on both Oakland Street and Chestnut Street. These observations were conducted for eleven or fewer vehicles per direction, possibly due to the low number of vehicles traveling along both roadways. Speeds for one hundred or more vehicles in each direction typically are checked for speed zoning purposes. However, the 25 miles per hour (mph) to 31 mph reported “85th percentile” speeds are consistent with that observed by VHB during off-peak field visits. These design speeds also are higher than the 25 mph regulatory speeds for both roadways. Accordingly, the speed measurements provided reasonably can be used for this analysis. For consistency, the desirable intersection sight distance levels should be based on these same observed speeds, and not the values based on the 25-mph regulatory speed shown in Table 1. The analysis also appropriately considered adjustments accounting for the grades of both roadways.

GPI acknowledges the 188 feet of available intersection sight distance looking to the north falls below the required 215-foot distance. GPI should confirm that this measurement was taken 14.5 feet from the edge of the Chestnut Street traveled way following American Association of State Highway and Transportation

¹ Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices, 11th Edition; U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration, Washington DC, December 2023.

Officials (AASHTO)² standards. VHB agrees that exiting motorists may pull closer to the road to help improve the sight line, and a 10-foot setback is frequently used to reflect that condition. GPI should conduct this measurement using this 10-foot setback to document the resulting sight line looking to the north. Some motorists may also use an even shorter setback with the front of their vehicle positioned at the edge of the road, though that is not a desirable condition. If the required intersection sight distance cannot be met, corrective measures will be required.

4. **Trip Generation** – Project trip generation was calculated based on the 11th edition of the “Trip Generation Manual³” published by the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE). This database includes studies of several comparable residential developments and commercial uses. Estimating trip generation using the ITE data is the accepted industry standard. However, ITE recently published an updated 12th edition of this manual in August 2025. However, the resulting trip generation estimates based on the newer data do not differ significantly compared to those based on the 11th edition. This should be documented by GPI. The trip generation estimates are conservative in that they do not account for internal trip sharing between the residential and retail uses. This likely would result in fewer net new trips than are reflected by the estimates in Table 2.
5. **Trip Distribution** – Trip distribution was estimated was based on U.S. census data, which is an accepted and appropriate methodology. No further analysis is required.
6. **Traffic Increases** – VHB agrees with the trip assignment shown in Figure 1. These resulting additional volumes on the surrounding roadways generally would not be considered significant. While no traffic data collection was conducted as part of the study, the nearby existing roadways themselves currently appear to carry low volumes.
7. **Parking Generation** – The Project narrative indicates that a 1.24 space per unit parking ratio will be provided for the residential uses, while the retail shops will rely on nearby public parking. As this falls below the 1.5 space/unit Zoning Bylaw requirements, the applicant has indicated that a waiver request would be provided if necessary. Analysis should be provided documenting the anticipated demand for the residential and retail uses compared to the available parking supply. This can be based on data from ITE, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), or other sources. The applicant also should provide discussion regarding how parking will be managed (i.e., bundled with leases, if residents will need to pay for parking, etc.).

Project Site Plans

VHB’s peer review also includes a technical review of the transportation aspects of the Project Site plans prepared by Millennium Engineering, Inc. dated September 23, 2025. VHB also is providing the following comments for consideration:

1. Stop lines and Stop signs should be provided facing exiting Site traffic at both driveways.
2. AAB-compliant tactile warning panels should be provided on both sides of the sidewalks intersecting each driveway.

² A Policy on the Geometric Design of Highways and Streets, American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, 2018.

³ Trip Generation Manual (12th Edition), Institute of Transportation Engineers (Washington, DC), 2025.

3. The Project's parking management should be discussed in terms of if parking stickers or other means will be provided to control parking. Consideration should be given to unbundling parking from the leasing of units so that any residents choosing not to own a vehicle would not have to lease a space.
4. The Applicant should discuss how move-in/move-out activities are managed at other existing properties controlled by the Applicant. While this activity occurs at any residential site, there is limited room to accommodate delivery trucks, which should be discussed.
5. The Zoning table on Sheet C5.0 "Civil Site Plan" should be modified to include the Project parking.
6. The proposed surfacing parking lot next to Oakland Street shows a total of 24 spaces, while the SV Design LLC plans show 23 spaces. This discrepancy should be resolved. Also, the SV Design LLC plans indicate that the eleven spaces immediately next to Oakland Street are designated for visitor use. This distinction also should be shown on the civil engineering plans (which show twelve spaces in this area).